

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Claims Listing

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:  
receiving, by a switching input of a tri-state buffer provided on a PCI-compliant (Personal Computer Interface) front card comprising an FE MAC (fast Ethernet media access controller) in a router, a sensing signal from a back card comprising an FE Phy (physical layer) in the router, where the tri-state buffer is serially disposed on a IDSEL (identification select) line corresponding to a particular channel, where the tri-state buffer is connected to both a pull up component located on the front card and a pull down component located on the front card;  
if the sensing signal is a logical low, then coupling a IDSEL signal corresponding to a particular channel of the back card to the front card; and  
if the sensing signal is not low, then decoupling the IDSEL signal from the front card and providing a logical low signal in the place of the IDSEL signal.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein said~~ the front card and the ~~said~~ back card are coupled via an MII (Media Independent Interface) bus.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an HDLC (high level data link controller) control, and the ~~said~~ back card comprises a T1/E1 frame/line interface.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein ~~said~~ the front ~~from~~ card and the ~~said~~ back card are coupled via a TDM (time division multiplexing) bus.
8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) SAR (software segmentation and reassembly), and the ~~said~~ back card comprises an ATM Phy.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein ~~said~~ the front card and the ~~said~~ back card are coupled via a Utopia bus.
10. (Currently Amended) In a communications system having a router, the ~~said~~ router having a PCI-compliant (Personal Computer Interface) front card, the ~~said~~ front card being configured to accept a LAN (local area network) or WAN (wide area network) compliant back card, an apparatus for detecting the absence of a Phy (physical) Layer device on the back card and communicating the ~~said~~ absence to the front card, the ~~said~~ apparatus comprising:
- means for switching disposed on the front card comprising, a tri-state buffer wherein ~~said~~ the tri-state buffer has an input, an output, and a switching input, wherein ~~said~~ the input and the ~~said~~ output of the ~~said~~ tri-state buffer being serially disposed on the ~~said~~ front card, and the ~~said~~ switching input of the ~~said~~ tri-state buffer is configured to be coupled to the ~~said~~ back card, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an FE MAC (fast Ethernet media access controller), and the ~~said~~ back card comprises an FE Phy (fast Ethernet physical layer), the tri-state buffer being

connected to both a pull up component located on the front card and to a pull down component located on the front card;

the said means for switching being configured to receive a sensing signal from the back card, the said sensing signal having a first and second state;

the said means for switching being further configured to provide a predetermined signal to the said front card responsive to the said state of the sensing signal.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein ~~said from~~ the front card and the said back card are coupled via an MII (media independent interface) bus.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an HDLC (high level data link controller) control, and the said back card comprises a T1/E1 frame/line interface.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein ~~said~~ the front card and the said back card are coupled via a TDM (time division multiplexing) bus.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an ATM SAR (asynchronous transfer mode software segmentation and reassembly), and the said back card comprises an ATM Phy (asynchronous transfer mode physical layer).

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein ~~said~~ the front card and the said back card are coupled via a Utopia bus.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for detecting the absence of a LAN (local area network) or WAN (wide area network) compliant device, the said apparatus comprising:

a PCI-compliant (personal computer interface) front card, the said front card being configured to accept a LAN or WAN compliant back card, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an FE MAC (fast Ethernet media access controller), and the said back card comprises an FE Phy (fast Ethernet physical layer);

the said front card comprising ~~further having~~ a switch, the said switch being a tri-state-buffer being serially disposed on a IDSEL (identification select) connection corresponding to a particular channel on the said front card, the said switch being ~~further~~ configured to receive a sensing signal corresponding to the said channel from the said device by switching input of the said tri-state buffer; and

wherein ~~said~~ the apparatus is configured to couple the said IDSEL connection to the said front card if the said sensing signal is in a first state, and to provide a low potential to the said, front card if the said sensing signal is in a second state, the switch being connected to both a pull up component located on the front card and to a pull down component located on the front card.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein ~~said~~ the front card and the said back card are coupled via an MII (media independent interface) bus.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an HDLC (high level data link controller) control, and the ~~said~~ back card comprises a T1/E1 frame/line interface.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein ~~said~~ the front card and the ~~said~~ back card are coupled via a TDM (time division multiplexing) bus.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein ~~said~~ the front card comprises an ATM SAR (asynchronous transfer mode software segmentation and reassembly), and the ~~said~~ back card comprises an ATM Phy (asynchronous transfer mode physical layer).

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein ~~said from~~ the front card and the ~~said~~ back card are coupled via a Utopia bus.